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SCRIPT OF THE SUN
VERSES * * * BY
MABEL PARKER HUDDLESTON



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Script of the Sun

Verses

By

Mabel Parker Huddleston



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(G. P. Putnam's Sons)

1915

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1915



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To

GILMAN HENRY TUCKER

AND

CAROLINE KIMBALL TUCKER,

DEAR PARENTS AND FRIENDS,

THIS LITTLE BOOK IS OFFERED

IN GRATEFUL DEDICATION

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SCRIPT OF THE SUN

WHEREFORE?

*When a song stirs at the heart,—
Still untaught to soar or sing,—
Like the mother-bird, would'st thou
Leave the drowsy-rocking bough,
Patiently to guide the venturous wing?*

*Nay: with comfortable croon
Soothe asleep thy fledgling bird;—
Flight no end hath save the nest,—
Songs that strain the quivering breast
Back to silence fall again, unheard.*



LIBERTY

My life is closed on every side
From freedom, like a waxen cell
That serried cells enfold;
Yet out of many a flower-bell
Its poignant sweets are gathered up
By winged adventurers bold;
The glory of the horizons wide
Is summed within my tiny cup,
Fortunes of foreign gold.

“LABRADOR TEA”

Could I but make my days
As golden as yon sprays
Of leaves despised and low,
Then would I reach, O friend,
No uncontented end,
Though but the sky should know.

In one small nook o' the earth
Had I but scattered mirth
Warm as their ruddy cheer,—
Had I but laughed to the sun,—
Were not the task well done
That brought me here?

FRIENDSHIP

Youth opens but a wicket-gate,
 Inviting one alone;
And holds that guest a prisoner
 With barriers hard as stone.

Ah! but we learn, in calmer years,
 To set the great doors wide,
That many a soul may break our bread,
 Free to depart or bide.

Sweet is one rose upon the breast,
 Or shrin'd within a room;
But those that throng the highway hedge—
 What life-breath in their bloom!

MANHATTAN

Over the crowds and grime
Of the City's eastern side
Rises a vision as fair
As dreams too dear to bide.

Tower that climbs o'er tower,—
Pinnacle, column, and spire,—
Pale as a rounded pearl,
Crowned with the sunset fire.

And over the ungraced lives
Of the struggling folk below,
May hover a lovelier dream
Than spirits at ease can know.

THE FAIRY-TALE

("Help to spin the fairy-tale, will you?"

The Servant in the House.)

With delicate fibres plucked from stems in bud;
With riven heart-strings knotted in a skein;
With spinnings of men's toil; with threads of rain;
With strands of light from afternoons that wane;—
Come let us help to weave the Fairy-tale.

Sweeter than all the feasts man's hand hath laid;
Fairer than silken robes of lucent fold;
Richer than palace towers, or buried gold;
Truer than all that chroniclers have told;—
More closely dear—Ah, weave the Fairy-tale.

Out of the piercing of uncounted hearts;
Out of the straining of uncounted eyes;
Out of the breaking of a thousand ties;
Even from the errors of our old surmise;—
At last—at last—begins the Fairy-tale.

NORTHWEST

How yields itself my heart to tides of air
That sweep upon the boughs, and like a foam
Toss back the broken sunbeams to the sky!
How buoyant moves my heart, now lifted high
On a great wave; then, almost unaware,
Lower'd to a cradling hollow, close at home.

After the idle zephyrs of the heat
These are again the trumpet winds that blow,
Adventurous, eager, from the strenuous North;
Bidding us haste from croft and ingle forth,—
Shout some brave call;—try some crusader's feat,—
Find some new quest for pilgrim youth to go.

What sudden ecstasy has moved the trees
Along the hill? What secret jubilance
From yonder coppice glinted and was gone?
The whole world gleams and beckons. Let us on!
Even though the limbs be pent,—the soul may seize
And wield,—nor all in vain,—the knightly lance.

TO THE YACHT "WHIM"

O white broad-pinioned bird with brooding breast,
That cherished us so many a day and night,
From haven to haven sweeping lonely flight,
Then dropping with some harbored flock to rest—

O lovely form of undismayed desire;
O vagabond, whom no dull thrift delays;
Flying as wishes fly, on magic ways;
Knowing no limit save the sunset's fire—

Our hearts take wing as thou dost, and explore
Thy full demesne of freedom. We will find
New continents of joy, and leave behind
The low familiar hamlets of the shore.

BUBBLES

In splendid hues of festival arrayed
(Yet,—penitent-wise—beneath austerely clad)
I saw the long procession of the glad
Walk with hush'd feet as they that are afraid,
Uplifted were the looks of all, and stayed
On bubbles whereof each light burden had:
Watching, in rapture, mirthful at once and sad,
Those pulsing orbs where many an iris played:

For each was 'ware how at his shoulder went
A shadow ne'er outstripped, however fast
His pace;—nor yet, however slow he crept,
Would it pass on before; nor ever slept;
But with him trod, on its own errand bent—
To whelm his fragile heaven at the last.

LE JEU NE VAUT PAS LA CHANDELLE

The long night's play is o'er;
The early daylight streams—
White banisher of dreams—
Over the card-strewn floor.

Balking his utmost power,
Who ventured hope and heaven,
Fortune the prize hath given
To him who staked an hour.

Now like a wasted life,
Lavished in empty game,
The flickering candle-flame
Meets dawn with ghastly strife.

Spent is the taper's flare
That, had Fate bidden, might
Have burned, an altar light,
A living flower of prayer.

PURGATORY—AT NEWPORT

Here is a soul in torment; dost thou see
Far down along the bare, rock-prison'd beach,
What sullen surges follow, each on each,
A salt, relentless tide of memory:—
How from the arch where length of agony
Hath deeper worn than measure of man can teach,
Gather slow tears, to bitter fulness reach,
Then, echoing, fall, reluctant, ceaselessly:
Nay! but above, openeth an infinite sky;
Close grasses heal the earth that once was torn;
Swift seabirds in and out the chasm fly,
Whose nested young in scar and crevice dwell;
Service and peace,—these from the depth are born.
'Tis pain of Purification, not of Hell.

TANTALUS

I am the desert just beyond
The vital blessing of the stream;
Hard by my sands cool apples gleam,
Melons, and grapes, through densest leaves,
And ruddy clover scents the sheaves;
But only fires to fires respond
In my hot heart, whose empty deep
Glows with mirage and many-colored dream.

I am the rock above the pool,
Beyond the utmost of the tide;
No living growth my ridges hide;
Only the storm-wind hither brings,
Once in a while, a wave that flings
The yearned-for spray, the salty cool:—
God! make me some low reef whereon
All day white surges toss from side to side.

CARMAGNOLE

As I went staidly down the street
The pacing folk, in modish dress,
With feathers cocked, and buckled shoes,
Caught hands to dance the Carmagnole;
Like beggar-bands with naught to lose—
Rich, poor, the silly and the wise,—
They swung and stamped with reckless feet,
Till disarrayed were frill and tress
And jangling ribbons dazed the eyes
 La! La! the Carmagnole!

I followed and beheld, abashed,
How ribaldry broke through the song;
How madness in the frolic beat,
As wilder leaped the Carmagnole!
The flints and cobbles of the street
Struck out old fires of grudge and wrong,
And laughter grew a taunting grin,
And knife-blades in the twilight flashed,
And bullets sped with grievous din
 La! La! the Carmagnole!

Still on the rabble whirled and on!
Some died where saints half-broken stood;
Some stained the paving as they went,
Deep-drunken with the Carmagnole:
And I limped after with lament
Lest utterly, for haste and spite,
They trample peace, the nurse of good;
Until the crooked streets were done
And through the gate we reached the night
 Alas! Alas! the Carmagnole!

The great moon smote the noise with scorn;
The wind blew each man's lullaby;
With falling stars, a quiet dropped,
That broke the spell of Carmagnole,
The weapons fell, the turmoil stopped,
In sudden shame of such affray.
Still link'd we heard faint melody
Of birds that spied the edge of morn;
And sat us down to wait the day
 We stormed to meet in Carmagnole.

ON "DEATH CROWNING INNOCENCE"—
WATTS

Well mayst thou crown that drooping downy head,
And seal with palms those softly folded eyes,
For like a lamb that in atonement dies,
Is Innocence for our transgressions dead!
Wherever men are pinched for fire and bread
Famine stills first of all the baby's cries;
And, with the smoke, the moans of children rise
While conquerors through a pillaged city tread.
Yet through the ages, hath such pitiful pain
Stung man—delaying awhile to feast or kill—
Ever to frame new shelter for his child,
Barred against war, and heaped with hoarded grain.
Lo! what vast fabrics have the nations piled,
Yet in their courts the Babe is martyred still!

TRANSFORMATION

(On Seeing "The Winterfeast")

Now from mine awe-struck heart, one vehement
prayer

Cries out, a prayer foredoomed in sooth to fail,
For how should I, with hardly proven mail,
Subdue the curse that all man's race must bear?

"May I, O Lord, avoid by any care
Offence to these, the innocent and frail,
Thy little ones, from whom all day a tale
Of helpless pain goes forth, yet none will spare!
May I?" yet God's reply myself I know:

"Leave then all other sin, for what but now
Was vanity, or sloth, or hate, may go
From hand to hand, until—ye guess not how—
Weighted with long injustice, many a woe,
It fall upon some piteous baby brow."

IN WAR-TIME

“O nation souls, whereof our souls are part
Why are you sluggish in nobility,
Slow to kind deeds, inert in charity,
But swift to anger, urgent for revenge,
Alert in greed, and hot for arms and strife,—
Those ugly idols of an ancient day?”
Thus as the noise of war came crash on crash,
I questioned, looking inward and without,
And from my thought's remotest cleft, I heard:
“Behold are not thy finest treasures locked;
Kept with frugality from each day's use;
For contemplation, not for daily bread?
So do the nations hide away their best,
And feed from day to day on coarser food.
Bring out thy best each hour, from dawn to dusk,
Reach with full hands to all within thy house,

And all that pass thy door; for only so
May that slow-growing mind to whose vast frame
Our minds are held as grains of shifting sand
Are grappled to the earth, achieve at last
Its perfect orb like the completed moon."

1914

Not for ourselves we search the skies,
While stars again shine Christmas-wise,
For angel flights proclaiming peace,—
But for our brothers all, we pray,
That these, before they perish, may
From tangled hatreds find release.

Our needed grace were strength to give
Unto our land, while yet we live
In peace, our lives' full-measured store;
As those have given,—or right or wrong,—
Who cover with a silent throng
The fields where shepherds watch no more.

THE HOUSE OF LIFE

*Pearls are lost and gold;
Never tears or laughter;
These abide though many a year
Wear away thereafter.*

*Of our smiles we build
Each his soul's fair dwelling;
From our tears is drawn the spring
By the doorstep welling.*

*Even the builder goes
But with one guest thither.
Dear, unheeded, by the porch
The waiting roses wither!*

THE LOVER TELLS OF THE SONG IN HIS HEART

Drifts that have felt the print of the wind's low-
 hovering wing,—

Peaks in shimmering hoods of fiery noon-tide blue,—
Mantles of tempest lifted for sunset to peer below,—
Lovelier yet is the dream-pavilion I weave for you.

But music eddying ever through fragrant curtain and
 fold

Is sweet with the old refrains, with themes of struggle
 and pain,

With the laugh of a crippled child, the patience of age
 in the dark,

The croon of the childless over a vision vain.

PRUDENCE

My meeting bonnet's in the box
For Colin is away;
If mended be my gown, and neat,
I care not to be gay.

The plaited lace about the crown,
The roses 'neath the brim,
The happier roses on my cheeks,
I keep them all for him.

A COMPLIMENT

In the morn, at waking,
 Young thoughts rub their eyes,
Running off along the world
 Till mentor Memory cries:
“The hours of the coming day
 Have many a task to do”—
'Tis hard to call them back again,
 For they have fled to you.

On the edge of evening,
 All their labors done,
My thoughts to watch your slumbers,
 Slip from me, one by one;
I cannot sleep till all my thoughts
 Be folded safe at home,
So with a thousand dreams of you
 I bribe them not to roam.

ABSENCE

MORNING

The quiet hour pondereth storms;
The boughs are lifted slow with sleep;
Insensibly, to northward creep
Pale clouds, that grow to sombrer forms.

LATER

A tremor falling down the air,
Yet never sound or touch of rain;
Blue distance deepening through the plain;
Persistent crickets everywhere.

AFTERNOON

Strong as winds that rouse the tree;
Sweet as call of hidden thrush;
Swift as drops that break the hush;
With them comes the thought of thee.

A SONG

I would I were a merman,
And in the deep sea furrows
I'd ambush me, to lurk beneath
The mists of falling foam;
And there I'd watch and listen
A many long to-morrows,
To meet my dearest sailing
Alone, afar from home.

I would I were a sea-gull,
And with my gray cloud-brothers
I'd lift my piercing wing to flight
And lose familiar lands;
Amid the bent white canvas
I'd swoop, not fearing others,
And search, where sat my dearest
To greet me with her hands.

Fain were I sky and ocean,
To spread her fit adorning;
The waves should toss glad music,
And from sun-haunted climes,
The winds should blow bright blossoms
And buds as red as morning,
And showering soft my dearest,
Wake me her laughter chimes.

THE LAKE

Save where anon light frets of wind skim by,
Whose track, a moment, rough with sunlight, gleams;
Among the hills the cloudless water dreams,
The level likeness of unrippled sky.

O quiet mirror, filled and over-filled
Out of the infinite blue that broods above,—
As mine own soul, beneath its heaven of love,
Whereof no end is figured, lieth still,—

Is it not pain, of all upon thee poured,
To hold a part so narrow? Wouldst not break,
Thy wooded boundaries for the wide sky's sake,
To flood with azure, glen and valley broad?

Rest and receive: the measureless ocean sees
Horizons reach beyond its ultimate bar:
Thy skies,—my joy,—above containing are;
'Tis God o'er brims our utmost draught of these.

TEMPERAMENT

At the waning of night, a thought set all my heart
 achill,
As if a wisp of fog blew stealthily from the sea,—
“Thy dearest of all is going afar, and farther still,
And thy love unspoken remains, a long remorse to
 thee.”

The word thou didst not say shall choke all utterance
 back;
The kisses thou hast not given shall sting on thy lips
 for years;
In the light of remembered eyes, the morning its light
 shall lack;
Thou shalt thirst with an endless thirst, made sharp
 with the salt of tears.

Then panting with fear I sprang, my own to follow
and claim;
And finding, I thought to speak, but my throat brought
forth no tone;
And while I struggled still to whisper the long-loved
name,
My feet turned with me, and left again my belovèd
alone.

ANNIVERSARY

Not all of me is wedded unto thee,
Belovèd, nor all of thee to me, alack!
For strange perverseness lurks in every soul,
And sweeter is the fragment than the whole;
Thou hast the heart—so let the rest go free.

Is not the spirit like a wilderness
With one warm lodge among its guardian trees
Where one clear melody a rillet brings
To join the fitful chant the rapid sings
For rapture of its unspent eagerness?

Hence foot-worn trails go forth through slope and dale
To open pasture-lands, and meadows lapped
With mosses soft as unremembering sleep,
And carmined like rose petals in a heap
Of blended sorts, the crimson with the pale.

But unto many a wood no pathways wind,
Where sunshine creeps in far-dissevered gleams,
Or many a sullen tarn that brooding lies
Where even the hunter pauseth in surprise;
And many a mountain crest is long to find.

Ah! but the lodge whereof we cannot tire,
Returning weary with the autumn chill!
Here, where our hearts are sheltered side by side,—
Here shall we fetch our best from far and wide,
And pile new logs upon the laughing fire.

A SWORD-MOTIF

Since every adequate soul is wrought and tried,
Tortured to steel for God's austerest ends,—
A blade that unto subtle service bends,
And yet in virtue steadfast doth abide—
Shall Love, who rules for God, be satisfied
With largesse that of mere abundance spends,
With liberal laughter that the summer lends,
Tears that but echo rains of wintertide?
The years, like shadowy forests of old song,
Hide stern encounters; lest, some hour, I fail
Love's need, being all unhardened yet and frail,—
Temper me, Pain, thine own extreme to bear;
With fire and anvil make my spirit strong;
Even when I cry, smite on and do not spare.

GRINDELWALD

As all that now I am is given to thee—
So poor a gift; as, fain to make it more,
Reverent I study Love's enigmas o'er,
Seeking to yield the utmost I may be:
So with self-envying—for thy sake—I see
Many a rich grant of beauty, mine of yore,
Gone, as the tide ebbs from the carven shore,
Leaving the shape alone it wrought in me.
Beloved, search deep within mine eyes, and claim
Their treasures of remembrance; I could yearn
All to forget, couldst thou but watch the snow,
Eternal, sharply shadowed; and below,
'Gainst the sheer mountain-wedge, the warm air burn,
Dim as the azure inmost of a flame.

BLOOM

What have I left, beloved, to give to you?
What treasure worthy of this festal time?
What message, in a masking-cloak of rhyme,
The birthday flowers before your feet to strew?

Though Love at first might reckon every bliss,—
As croons a child over his Christmas toys,—
How should the tale be kept of later joys,
Beyond the measure now of word or kiss?

Love lieth now deep-hidden and at rest,
Life's ultimate source, like some slow-gathered spring
Whereto a thousand silent crannies bring
The showers once turbulent on the mountain-crest.

Yet, as the leafy stems that have no speech,
Being blest beyond content with light and dew,
Fling forth their hearts in jubilant form and hue,
And glorious utterance of blossom reach;

So trust I my deep ecstasy, long still'd,
Unto one folded flower, a token meet,
A bud with fragrant promise softly sweet,
A cup from heaven's pure splendors to be filled.

WITH A HYACINTH IN BUD

Scorn not, belovèd, this chime of muffled bells,
This sheltered firstling of capricious Spring,
Lifting green lances in a guardian ring,
And pallid buds set close as honey cells,
Where but a pledge of sealèd sweetness dwells;
Lo! here and there the petals flush, and fling
Their crumpled tips to starry blossoming,
And scatter fragrance full of drowsy spells.
Since we found Love, close folded thus and pale,
With the past Spring, beneath that earliest bloom
What richer visions open, radiant, slow,
That wring the heart with joy; and still below
What mysteries promise! Yet we are so frail!
How shall our souls for all at last find room?

ENIGMA

*Some clouds look native to the blue,
And some but strangers drifting by;
As, all unwarned, to heights of Heaven
On breaths of joy we sometimes fly.*

*Beside the angels' feathery white
How poor we seem! how dull and gray!
Yet were we not their kin, what air
Could ever spirit us their way?*

THE ALLIANCE

You have builded a wall against the wind;
You have lifted a roof against the stars;
But the beam and the stone,
Can they hold their own
With the light and the breath within the bars?

You may shroud the window and hammer the bolt;
You may wedge the chink with your own shorn hair;
But the hearth you heap
To warm your sleep
Hath a bond with the fierce beleaguering air.

A sudden flame in the stifled soul
Shall wreck the cell and disclose the sky;
For the wind and the star
Call through your bar
To the embers you yet must nurse or die.

CAPTIVITY

'Tis not the world,—this prison where we wait;
Whether its rough and undisguisèd stone
Bid us put faith in naught save walls alone;
Or tapestries with visions delicate
For boundaries they curtain, half atone;

What though the close-barred slits along the wall
Look but on high gray battlements, where attend
Warders whose jests we may not comprehend;
Nor to our questioning answer they at all,
But soon or late from each man part his friend:

Yet of our fellows here in times long past,
Still in the rock we read the carven cry,
And feel a liberty that doth not die;
And hand to hand we yet may hold so fast
That hearts reiterate, "Thou art real—; and I."

And light and odors of the country-side
Across the rigid ramparts hither stream;
God's unseen fields that some a legend deem,
Girdle our narrow keep; the heart's warm tide
Leaps to the sun. The prison is the dream.

“OUR LIFE IS FULL OF THE SENSE OF
DIRECTION”

WILLIAM JAMES.

The spruces pointing to the sky
Point also deep beneath the stream:
In my still heart methinks as well
They point to some unfathomed dream;

The mountains brood among the clouds,
And brood within the lake apart;
The pass that cleaves them, like a gate,
It seems a gate within my heart;

Through all the tangles of the marsh,
Through all the thickets of the hill,
Our thoughts like arrows strain afar;
We fashion paths that call us still.

THE WILL

My soul is not a rooted tree;
My soul is not a whirring wheel;
Nor is it as a lake that lies
A path for winds, a glass for skies:
My soul's an eager flight of birds
That ever speed, nor bond nor free;
A cloud of nimble wings, yet all
Whate'er they wish, whate'er they feel,
Follow one guide, without a call,
Obeying an unseen wizardry.

AFTER READING "PATTERNS," BY JAMES
OPPENHEIM

In what strange garden-close
For this day's fancy grow capricious flowers,
Unpatterned, kinless, lawless;
Both shapeless called and flawless;
Sprung in a moment, not in patient hours;
Sudden as mushrooms on dead forests fed
And haply sometimes virulent as those.

Not from a vagrant whim a flower is born,
But riseth from the ground,
Sure as the arrow of its promised flight,
Within the sway of its allotted bound;
And adding leaf to leaf by due degrees,
Expands its happy star, to light the morn,
Obedient to imperative decrees.

Wherefore the claim
That this should be the happiness of man
To lick and raven like ungoverned flame,
Scorning control or plan;
Leaping and tossing wild hysteric arms
Like homeless, childless Bacchanals wild to follow
Their vine-crowned Deity through tangled hollow,
And up the torrid slope above the farms
Where simple folk, at each awakening,
Grapple familiar harms!
Man who was born to knit uncounted laws
Into the fabric of a common cause,—
Why should he doff self-mastery like the hill
Where crags are loosened into heaps of stone
That crumble to a crust
Of arid dust,
With thorns and ragged thistles overgrown?
It is not Life to lie
Lank seaweed in the flow
Of eddy impulse, but to search
Of every wave the limpid depth and glow,
Of every moment all the moment hides
For us, or from us asks—

Ecstasy or stern tasks—
And to lay by,
Rich purchase from each journey of the eye,
Vigor that spurs or beauty that abides.

TRADITION

Scorn not the road which frees the eye
From searching every tread;
Beneath the clover pitfalls lie,
And in the timber many a stick,
Barren and dead, with cruel prick,
Buffets the bending head.

But safe upon the beaten way
I watch the herbage blend
In fine-spun webs of green and gray;
My vision mounteth at its will
The sternest bastions of the hill—
Or seeks the rainbow's end.

“THE GARDEN WALL”

MONTANA

If God hath hewn His noblest pyramids
From many-tinted, hard-compacted clay
That ages long in sordid mire lay;
Shaping them fair with frost and glacier-bite,
And thin white streams that fall
With swift caresses down the enormous height
Of amphitheatres whose grey steep forbids
Entrance to all
Save to the quiet-footed cloud
Whose shadow dims the orange lichen-rust,—
Perchance our lives, that measured by the just,
Appear so poor and prone,
Holding so little whereof to be proud,
So much we would disown,
Seen through the soft enshrouding of the skies,
May gain faint loveliness for immortal eyes.

NORTHERN LIGHTS

They cried unto me "A portent"
And I arose from sleep, and hastened to the deck.
There I saw in the sky long shafts of light.
They sprang from the North, and stabbed among the
stars.
Like swords, they sped to and fro.
They pierced to the top of Heaven,
And fell again to the horizon.
Then sought I farther,
That I might know of what metal were such weapons
forged;
Lo! again I saw them as wind-long strands of hair,
And their ends were tangled in their passing.
Then at my ear, one whispered:
"Behold the locks of God!
He it is, Who hath loosed them,
To be blown about forever,
That, in the sky, might shine the greater light."

THE WOLVES

When I walked through the city,
The gate of the King's treasury lay open,
And he who stood as guardian bade me enter,
And fill both hands with treasure.
Then, being wealthy, I walked in fear
Lest the King should send to pursue me,
And take my riches from me.
At the church door, I said: "I will give it to the priest,
Lest I set my heart upon it,
And the King take also my heart from me."
Then the priest,
Very old and peaceful,
Answered me:
"O Child, the King takes not nor hath he given;
But always lies his treasure open to all his citizens.
The wolves without the city,

Those are they who now and again,
Entering an unlatched gate,
Despoil even the most wealthy.
Nevertheless, fret not,
For without the wolves,
Mayhap there were no walls,—no city,—
Yea, even no joy in treasure or in safety.”

CREATION

I looked over the mighty sea, and it was one,
To the end of my seeing it was smooth as an azure
bowl

That the potter draweth from the kiln.
I laid the touch of my soul upon it with a great love.
Everywhere it was soft and comforting,
And tenderly stirred like the breathing of a very little
child.

Then saw I the wind,
With cheeks puffed out,
Fall on the sea like Lucifer.
Into ripples he bent it,
And into waves,
And into huge pyramids.
They rushed together with a clang,
And with a lightning flash of green;

They tossed fountains from their peaks;
They hurtled against the rocks with volleys of foam,
And every slenderest jet of foam was beautiful;
And every turn of every wave was beautiful;
Entangled in one net of wrath and beauty;
And still the mighty width of sea was one;
And the wind—was he perhaps its servant?

THE IDEALIST

A level road without a stone,—
A rounded sea without a wave,—
A cloudless dome of silent air,—
For these my Father bids me crave.

THE SCIENTIST

The scalpel's point, the knife's blue blade,—
Uncounted shapes of foot or wing,—
An atom cleft, and cleft again,—
To me my Father's mandate bring.

THE POET

Each leaflet dances, yet the tree
Is bound in curves of life grown calm.
My Father bids me love at once
Earth's turbulent change, and Heaven's still balm.

INTUITION

Who reads the scriptures of the sun?
Who guesses half the secrets told
At dusk by aspen leaves a-cold
To crowded constellations of the moss?
Who wears the dignity that cloaks
Wide-shouldered mountains? Who invokes,
Aright, the pure serenity that shines
In steel-bright shallows of a loitering river?

O gaze and gaze on tree-tops where the wind
For sight makes golden music. Follow, follow,
Where the wind skimmeth low as any swallow!
Search the up-springing vault of lucent waves,
Or grace of berried leafage at your feet;
Lay down your ear to catch Life's manifold beat,
And so surprise Time's riddle in the telling.

Fetch hence a wisdom not of mind or word;
Touch of the verity beneath the name,
Truth's witness, that doth yet but little claim;
No current coin, but a treasure still;
Not numbering of the stars, but starlight's gleam—
The even rhythm behind the arrowy beam—
And far from speech as essence of a flower.

THE DEAD TREE

Rigid and gaunt and spiral lined
I rear my frame in silver sheen;
Nourished no more with vital green,
No more a bower for the birds,
No more a shadow for the herds,
Nor answering music to the wind.

But these bare boughs, before, behind,
Outstretching each a beggar's hand,
My chronicle of effort stand,—
Of life's long grasp for wavering lights,
Of yearly reach to clearer heights,
And certain comfort here I find.

TREASURES

*The sun makes jewels in the trees,
The clouds trail fairy tissues by,
Long grasses, where the shallows reach,
Like festal ribbons fly.*

*And though I may not bind them on,—
And may not change them in the mart,—
Nor mirror them in envious eyes—
I wear them in my heart.*

THE FAUN-CHILD

“Lay down your cheek with mine
On this low bed of fern,
To laugh and doze and in the pine
Watch the sun-cobweb burn:

“Cuddle with me beneath
The woolly hazel-leaves;
Or frolic till we topple down
The maize’s plummy sheaves;

“Or tease the grizzled shrew
Chiding from yonder bough,
Hob Squirrel, from whose hoard were snatched
These nuts I nibble now.

“All things I love, but know
Of grief or pity naught;
Brothers of yestere’en, to-day
Flit not across my thought.

“No child of man am I,
Yet join my mirth one hour:—
Of this brief day I am the breath,—
The song, the light,—the flower.”

FOG

The shredded semblance of a cloud,
Blown from the sea, and drifting by,
Blurs all things,—even the silvery tips
Yon poplar nods against the sky.

Hushed as beneath uneddying snow,
The 'minished circle of the sight
Pulseth, although the west is wan,
Faint echoes to the sunset light.

SILENCE VISIBLE

A mist that from the far-off sea
Last night crept inland up the hills,
Climbs higher with the morn, and stills
The sun's mid-August revelry.

As if noon's blaze were trumpet-loud,
Now, while its glory doth abate,—
Though bees still hum in velvet state,—
Slowly, methinks, the gathering cloud

Lulls jocund summer into rest,
Breathing a silence, full, unstirred,
As when a gray-winged ocean bird
Broods o'er the circle of her nest.

ASPIRATION

The moon's thin ghost peers down, by wholesome day
Caught lingering after cock-crow; bramble-vines
Tangle the hither slope: the long ledge shines
Sheer white beyond the many-rippled bay.

Like a smooth panther, stretched along the sky
The down bends gradual, bare for noon to steep,
Save where soft glooms of protean shadow creep
In pace with clouds deep-bosomed journeying by.

There where the road climbs to its half-way stage,
A small, gray, lonely church doth lift its spire
O'er the earth's edge, and thither my desire
Hath all this morning gone on pilgrimage.

WILD-CARROT FLOWERS

White flowers, who tilt your starry heads
High-stemmed, above the stubble grasses,
And hold a honied stirrup-cup
To every errant moth that passes;
Fragrant to-day beneath the sun,
Treasuring jewelled rain to-morrow,—
Fain had I freedom of your guild,
Poor human thrall to hope and sorrow!

My fancies with their fettered wings,
Sweet windy world, I dare not lend you;
Too wide and still your subtle peace
For captive thought to comprehend you.
I lie a beggar on the earth,
As through my veins thy warmth is creeping.
One hour, strong Mother of us all,
Soothe my unrested soul to sleeping.

OCTOBER DAY

This is the day when Autumn's self, full-drunken
From God's own cup, goes like a Maenad leaping,
A fickle troop of purple shadows sweeping
O'er peak and town and river forest-sunken.

The rigid oak is smitten to vast humming;
The pine majestic bends with mystic singing;
The lithe beech dances like a wave, up-flinging
A crest of golden leaves, to hail her coming.

While we below, among their shafts unstirring,
'Mid sunbeams with the pine-dust softly falling,
Hear unto us that potent jubillance calling,
And feel its might our slow hearts onward spurring.

NEW ENGLAND FOREST

Into your dappled shadows, O my trees,
Love leadeth me for comforting; Love and fear
Of dreams now dead as these low, empty boughs,
The record frail of many a climbing year.

Ye show forth strength, belovèd, like the hills,
Yet in your veins life throbbeth as in mine:
Those purple-fretted shafts, like centuried stone,
Lift living boughs to drink the light's rich wine.

O beautiful and mighty, who endure,
Bending to every buffet of the air,
Your ancient naves, roof-set with luminous leaves,
Arch in a peace that hath no need for prayer.

While o'er the twitterings of the underwood,
At touch of wind on tunèd leaves a-drowse,
Rises and falls the music of the pine,
Freshened with sea-spray sound of beechen boughs.

THE HOUR OF MIRACLE

When I do speak of April, thou dost praise
The flush of May, when rains no longer chill,
When winds rock wild geraniums on the hill,
And rosy petals strew the orchard ways;
Thou lovest Spring's rejoicing; I, the days
When Earth is startled by the robin's trill;
And through the forest, bare and brown and still,
Faint leafage creeps in many-shimmering haze.

Joyful their lot, who sat, new-garlanded,
High at the feast for coming of the Queen
Back to Admetus from the hands of Death;
Yet better, being her servant, to have seen
Her eyes first open, dark with lingering dread,
And, in the silence, caught her earliest breath.

HIGHLANDS

Here among the chestnuts, I am fain to linger,
High on the hillside, looking o'er the sea,
Watching the surf like long white lariats lashing,—
Freed from expectation, dearest, even of thee.

Thou art mine, what matters going or returning?
Golden are the chestnuts, ripe and full of peace;
Golden are the hours, each one all-sufficient.
From the task of hoping, Autumn brings release.

Ah! but there's the evening! That's our only griev-
ance!

When the gold slips ever down, from leaf to leaf,
Still but gaining magic, till the dull sea-marshes
Flame in orange-tawny, with enchantment brief.

Did I speak of grievance? Nay, the breakers crashing
Into snow and thunder, miles along the shore,—
Hence they seem like ripples at the rim of ocean,
With its calm they brim my heart, and I shall fret no
more.

THE FLEET

The fleet goes by beyond the hills
That rise like islands in the blue,
Galleons in even pace with stately sails.
No signals call, or friendly hails,
Yet as each comes in sight
Behind the restless branches, calm and white,
As at some message waved my spirit thrills.

I know they do not pass this way
With any word for me or mine,
I know they hold their steady course to meet
With fellow convoys in the noonday heat,
And carry blessings to a distant slope;
No less they beckon to some inner hope,
That still is not desire, and will not stay.

Why should I wish to voyage with these?
Why do my eyes still climb the edge
Of gracious mountains that conceal
The cloud-fleet's course? Why should I feel
Moved by these far-away unfeeling things,
Who have my meat and wine.
Pillows and coverlets and garments fine,
Friends, children, love, achievement, wealth, and
ease?

The floating mist hath naught to give;
The wind speaks not our human tongue;
The cliff hath no reward to stir our feet,
Nor even the purple uplands with their sweet
Unfruited flowers; yet the height, the cloud
Quickens like banners of a kinship proud,—
Some aspiration whereby we too live.

BELOW

Out of the busy morning of the house
They beckon me, the rippling sunny leaves,
The bending boughs that stir a little space,
And then are still, and then are farther stirred,
As a new wind comes,—till at last the trees
Yielding, harmonious, surge along the air
With one deep chord of movement and myriad sound.

ABOVE

How slowly floateth every quiet cloud
In the still sky, nor dips a forward bow,
As would a cargoed ship, whose rounded sail
The wind had put his strength to: yet mine eyes,
That watch this lofty squadron, shadow-keeled,
Coasting the horizon, ache to look instead
Over the remote, blue, traffic-roughened sea.

VISTA

Beyond dark plumes of pine, beneath
The gray unquiet sky,
Hill fadeth into azure hill,
So far away they lie.—

A bit of distance, jewel-set
Amid the horizon's round,
Framed in from landmark and from road,—
An undiscovered ground.

Perchance, unwitting, we have climbed
Those ledges, and have seen,
Beyond, but other hills; around
Only a pasture green.

Yet it remains a land of dreams
Aërial, unpossessed,
The sky's still harbor, where the blue
Lies, even in storms, at rest.

THE LAURENTIDES

Wild gardens of the North! O tawny moors,
Radiant with golden filaments of larch
And poplars poised on quaking stems, a flight,
So might it seem, of orange butterflies;
Where firs like cypresses mark rigid aisles,
And scarlet shrubs in terraces are spread!
Who 'neath your Autumn gaiety would guess
Your mighty age among the hills of earth?
What agonies of rock are blunted down
Into your peaceful, softly-sinking breasts?
What ancient waters here imprisoned lie;
What generations of forgotten trees
Lie tombed amid their children, under moss
Whose fairy forest mocks green boughs above?
O, joyful quietude of lovely age,
Unbroken by the hurries of the mart,
Might your far-travelling breezes sweep away
The smothering smoke that blurs our younger world,
And your wide heaven o'erarch our barren streets!

DAWN IN MONTANA

Across the gentle grassy hollow
That half-way severs two broad-rooted hills
Cloud filaments, as 'twere a long blown feather,
Seem falling slowly to an empty nest;
And higher, the thin moon
Barely diminished from its bright perfection
Sets a mysterious seal upon the secrets
Of the new morning.
High athwart the mountain
Falls the first warmth of sunrise, while the shadows
In cleft and forest draw themselves together,
And still untouched by sunlight, in the valley,
White almost as the moon and cloud above them,
Two horses graze, in fellowship contented,
That holds them more secure than fence or halter—
Strange link of love among earth's hordes embattled!

THE FAIRY

We questioned who had hewn so steep
The pinnacles that mock the eye,
Still fabulous as we behold?
What shaped so like a ruined keep
Of giants, fifty mortals high,
These walls wherein the ice-lakes sleep,
And wary-footed mountain sheep
Find an unthreatened fold?
We marvelled at a Titan's craft,
While a wee rillet slipping by
Down lustrous rock,—incessant, cold,
In snowy bubbles laughed.

FUTURISM

Fret, O man, for a hundred days,
Vex and harry your tired brain,
Never to these shall you attain—
The curve and hue of these lowly sprays
Fledging the hill with russet leaves
Close as a bird's warm-feathered breast
Many-colored as dahlia sheaves.

Mazes you fidget to devise
To lure our sight with a novel wile,
Snare not so subtly as yonder isle
Where slender grasses swirl and rise
And toss their yellowing plumes of seed
Under one wind in a thousand ways,
'Mid swaying fringes of river weed.



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